1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant.

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8]

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought.

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1956) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

Bambarra is walking, low hips!
Bambarra is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm lâ! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh viéco'l
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké viéco'l
Laillé laillé oh viéco'l
Laillé laillé tambouyé bouké houngan'm!
M'po'lé sou corps moin vié sor!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P 105]

8. *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings*

From early in January until Easter, each year, the Haitian countryside is infected with a riotous carnival spirit that puts all else in the background. First comes Mardi Gras, beginning early in January and building to a great climax at Shrovetide. And then on Ash Wednesday begins the seven-week festival known as Rara, Lwalwadi, or Chariopié.

Every week end in the Mardi Gras season the country roads and villages are alive with special music, dancing bands, and traditional kinds of masquerading. The little crossroads in the mountains where the *habitants* usually hold their markets are suddenly swarming with drummers, trumpeters, magicians, jugglers, masked dancers, and acrobats. Each band has its own name, its banners and paraphernalia, new topical songs composed for the occasion, and sometimes a dance virtuoso. Each roving band competes for the attention and admiration of the spectators, and its ranks are often swelled by passers-by moving in the same direction who choose to dance their way along the roads rather than walk. Often women and girls on distant market errands will join in the celebration, seemingly unencumbered by the heavy loads they carry on their heads.

The Mardi Gras of the mountains and the plains is a dynamic spring rite of which the urban elite version is only a pale and feeble imitation. There are no pretty floats, no exhibits of female beauty, and no Coca-Cola advertisements. Sometimes the country bands move into Port-au-Prince and join the urban activities.

One by one the spectacles pass by on their uncertain way—to north or south, into the town or out of the town, wherever chance leads them. In addition to the musicians, acrobats, jugglers, and masked dancers, there are baton twirlers, comedians on stilts, and mimes. Each group has its own theme. One may call itself the Zeaubeaups, another the Cochons Gris, another Cochons Rouges—names designating legendary

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

291
482

[491
489]

3. *Country people carrying produce to market. The highways of Haiti's economic life are the mountain trails and the unpaved roads over which the produce of countless small gardens is carried in bundles and baskets.*

[P 112-C]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-D]

4. *A peasant of the Mornagues Noires region, southern Haiti.*

142
291
482
415
516

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-H]

291
482
492
403
415

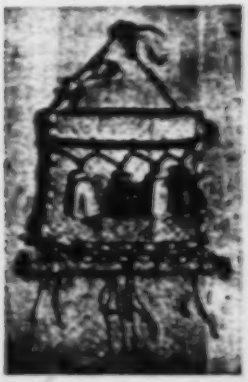
11 and 12. *Market day. On each woman's head is the agricultural produce she will sell in the village or city market. When she returns she will carry a lighter load of things she has purchased, and tied in her handkerchief will be a few small coins.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-HH]

776
798
532

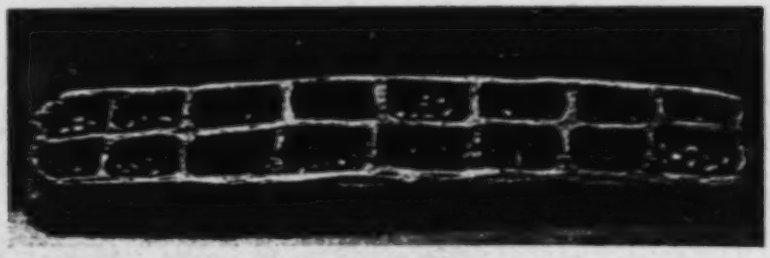
54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the houngan, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard loa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

285
482
531



55. An ajfor cousin, the traditional peasant knapsack.

524



56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. ℥ ℏ

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

℥ [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1954) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra. 534

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moumbongue, Congo Loangue, Pastorel, Mousondi, and Moutchétche. The drum for the Congo Loangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained. 534 535

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *cata*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands. 184 534

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum. 534 [461] [535] [482]

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*. [462]

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest. 184 534 535

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marasas*— 534 [492]
The Haitian word for "twins."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

spring water in the country districts is frequently

polluted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.